

Message Text

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ACTION DPW-01

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
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R 240358Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8102
INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
USLO PEKING
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI
DIA WASHDC
BARBERS POINT HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 21260

BARBERS POINT FOR JCRC

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y FOR MRN 21260 VICE 20766

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: CASC, VM, US
SUBJECT: RUMORS ON MIA'S

REF A. HONG KONG 8716 (B) BANGKOK 19666

1. FORMER U.S. POW IN VN, LARRY STARK, MET WITH EMBOFF
JULY 17 TO DISCUSS AMERICAN MIA'S IN VIETNAM AND LAOS.
STARK SAID THAT HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES HAVE ABOUT TEN
CASES OF FIRST-HAND SIGHTINGS BY VIETNAMESE OF AMERICAN
POW'S, WHO ARE ALLEGED TO HAVE BEEN SEEN ALIVE IN VIETNAM
SINCE 1975. STARK DECLINED TO PROVIDE ANY DETAILS, BUT
SUGGESTED THAT SOME NEW, PERHAPS STARTLING INFORMATION
MIGHT BE MADE PUBLIC WITHIN A FEW WEEKS. STARK REITERATED
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HIS DISSATISFACTION WITH USG EFFORTS TO FOLLOW-THROUGH
ON REPORTS OF MIAS. HIS STRATEGY, HE SAID, IS TO PRESENT
THE TEN CASES TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES HIRC WITH
THE HOPE THAT THE COMMITTEE OR A SUBCOMMITTEE WILL RE-
OPEN HEARINGS BASED ON THE TEN CASES. STARK SAID THAT TWO
GROUPS OPPOSED HIS EFFORTS AND THE RE-OPENING OF
HEARINGS--THE MONTGOMERY SELECT COMMITTEE AND THE STATE

DEPARTMENT. THE SELECT COMMITTEE DID NOT WISH ITS EARLIER FINDINGS CONTRADICTED, STARK SAID, AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT EAST ASIA BUREAU ATTACHES GREATER IMPORTANCE TO NORMALIZATION OF SRV-US RELATIONS THAN TO MIA'S. STARK ARGUED THAT THE U.S. WOULD LOSE MOST OF ITS LEVERAGE ON THE MIA ISSUE IF WE PROCEEDED FIRST WITH NORMALIZATION. USG SHOULD DEMAND AN ACCOUNTING OF 32 POW'S WHOSE NAMES WERE PROVIDED THE USG BY HANOI AND WHO APPARENTLY SUBSEQUENTLY DIED IN NORTH VIETNAMESE PRISONS. WE SHOULD ALSO DEMAND AN ACCOUNTING OF POW'S SEEN FIRST HAND SINCE APRIL, 1975 (THE TEN CASES, PRESUMABLY). IF WE DID NOT ASSIGN PRIORITY TO MIA'S RATHER THAN NORMALIZATION, WE WOULD, LIKE THE FRENCH, STARK SAID, BE SUBJECTED TO EXTORTION, AFTER NORMALIZATION, FOR SRV INFORMATION AND ACTION ON MIA'S.

2. EMBOFF REVIEWED EFFORTS OF THE DEPARTMENT, EMBASSY AND JCRC REP REGARDING MIA'S AND SOUGHT STARK'S ASSISTANCE IN PROVIDING OUR JCRC REP INFORMATION AND LEADS ON WHICH HE MIGHT FOLLOW UP. STARK COMMENTED THAT HE WAS SATISFIED WITH THE THOROUGHNESS OF THE FOLLOW THROUGH BY THE JCRC REP ON THE ONE LEAD HE (STARK) HAD PASSED ON. EMBOFF ALSO STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF NOT RAISING FALSE EXPECTATIONS AMONG AMERICANS WITH MISSING RELATIVES AND FRIENDS, WHICH COULD RENEW THEIR ANGUISH. STARK CONTENTED THAT PUBLICITY WAS THE ONLY MEANS OF PUTTING PRESSURE ON CONFIDENTIAL

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THE CONGRESS AND EXECUTIVE TO ACT.

3. COMMENT: WE WILL CONTINUE ROUTINE CONTACTS WITH STARK AND, OF COURSE, FOLLOW THROUGH ON ANY REASONABLE LEADS HE MAY PROVIDE. WE SUSPECT THAT STARK WILL PROBABLY TRY TO PURSUE HIS PROJECT THROUGH HIRC STAFFER JON HOLSTINE, WHOM HE MET DURING HOLSTINE'S VISIT TO BANGKOK. O'DONOHUE

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